Claims

[c1]   A method for distributing a print task among multiple printers, said method comprising the acts of:

      sending a print task to a print processor;

      sending print task modification commands to said print processor; and

      modifying said print task with said print processor.

[c2]   The method of claim 1 wherein said sending said print task modification commands comprises reading command data from a configuration file.

[c3]   The method of claim 1 further comprising the act of prompting a user for print task modification commands.

[c4]   The method of claim 2 wherein said prompting is print-processor based.

[c5]   The method of claim 2 wherein said prompting is driver-based.

[c6]   The method of claim 1 wherein said modification comprises dividing said print task into multiple modified print tasks.

[c7]   The method of claim 5 wherein said dividing comprises job splitting.

[c8]   The method of claim 5 wherein said dividing comprises copy splitting.

[c9]   The method of claim 5 wherein said dividing comprises a combination of copy splitting and job splitting.

[c10]   The method of claim 1 wherein said modifying comprises dividing said print task into multiple modified print tasks and further comprising the act of distributing said multiple modified print tasks to a plurality of printing devices.

[c11]   The method of claim 1 wherein said print task is a printer-ready file.

[c12]   The method of claim 1 wherein said print task is journalled printer data.

[c13]   A print processor capable of modifying a print task according to print task modification commands, said print processor comprising:

an input for receiving a print task;

an interface for receiving a print task modification command; and

an output for sending at least one modified print task.

[c14] The print processor of claim 11 wherein said interface receives print task modification commands independently of said input for receiving a print task.

[c15] The print processor of claim 11 wherein said interface is a dialog box.

[c16] The print processor of claim 11 wherein said interface prompts a user for job splitting parameters.

[c17] The print processor of claim 11 wherein said interface prompts a user for copy splitting parameters.

[c18] The print processor of claim 11 wherein said interface prompts a user for copy splitting and job splitting parameters.

[c19] The print processor of claim 11 wherein said interface prompts a user for multiple printer selection.

[c20] A computer readable medium comprising instructions for modifying a print task with a print processor, said instructions comprising the acts of:

sending a print task to a print processor;

sending print task modification commands to said print processor; and

modifying said print task with said print processor.

[c21] A computer data signal embodied in an electronic transmission, said signal having the function of modifying a print task with a print processor, said signal comprising instructions for:

sending a print task to a print processor;

sending print task modification commands to said print processor; and

modifying said print task with said print processor.

[c22]   A method for modifying a print task with a print processor, said method comprising the acts of:

sending a print task to a driver;

prompting a user for print task modification commands;

creating a spool file for said print task;

sending said spool file to a spooler;

spooling said spool file to a modifying print processor;

modifying said print task according to said print task modification commands thereby creating at least one modified print task;

sending said at least one modified print task to at least one printing device.

[c23]   A method for distributing a print task to multiple printing devices with a print processor, said method comprising the acts of:

generating a print task from an application, said print task being configured for printing on a single printing device;

invoking a print driver for combining device initialization and environment data for said single printing device and print task data from said application and creating a spool file;

obtaining cluster printing data;

sending said spool file to a spooler;

spooling said spool file to a cluster–enabled print processor (CPP);

modifying said spool file data with said CPP to cause said print task to be distributed to multiple printing devices thereby creating at least one modified print task; and

sending said at least one modified print task to said multiple printing devices.